

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism for an automotive vehicle comprising:

a pinion having a shaft section, and a gear section and a nose section,  
the said gear section being located toward an end of the between said shaft section  
and said nose section of said pinion;

a rack having a gear section coupled with the said gear section of the  
said pinion;

a housing containing an inner cylindrical wall enclosing at least portions  
of the said pinion and the said rack;

a bushing having an outer cylindrical wall concentrically rotatably received  
within the said inner cylindrical wall of said housing;

said bushing having an inner cylindrical opening, defined by an inner  
cylindrical wall which is non-concentric with respect to said outer cylindrical wall, for  
receiving and retaining said pinion along the cylindrical axis of said inner cylindrical wall;

the said bushing being rotatable within said housing to alter the position  
of said the pinion with respect to the said rack casing in a range of locations between a  
first position and a second position, the said first position locating the said gear section  
of the said pinion at a first distance relative to the said rack, the said second position  
locating the said gear section of the said pinion at a second distance relative to the said  
rack to thereby allow for adjustment of the degree of coupling between said gear  
sections of said pinion and said rack; the

said bushing defining having a defined first end for receiving and retaining  
said shaft section of said pinion for rotation therein and a second end, the second end  
being adjacent the for receiving and retaining said nose section end of the said pinion;  
and

a nut engaged with the said bushing at said first end thereof to retain said  
bushing in said housing and inhibit rotational movement of the said bushing with

respect to the housing, the said nut located adjacent to the said first end of the said bushing.

2. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, ~~the wherein said~~ nut ~~having~~ has a threaded inner surface, and the said bushing ~~has~~ having a threaded outer surface at its first end configured to engage the said threaded inner surface of said nut.

3. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 2, wherein said the pinion is and said bushing are received ~~by the~~ through an aperture formed in said nut.

4. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, wherein the nut is coupled with said bushing to retain said bushing and pinion within said housing.

5. Canceled) ~~A steering mechanism as in claim 4, the nut and the housing are coupled via a press-fit coupling.~~

6. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 5 ~~8~~, the wherein said nut ~~including~~ includes a flange configured to apply a force to the said housing, ~~wherein the force is substantially perpendicular to the pinion outer wall~~ and force said housing against said retainer.

7. (canceled) ~~A steering mechanism as in claim 1, the housing being substantially cylindrical.~~

8. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, further comprising a retainer located external to and adjacent to the said second end of the said bushing, the wherein said retainer is configured to provide an interference to said housing and secure the relative ~~prevent~~ axial positions of said ~~movement between the~~ bushing and the said housing when said nut is tightened.

9. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 8, wherein the said retainer is a ring-shaped retainer coupled with the said bushing, and the said ring-shaped retainer contacts a surface of the said housing.

10. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, the wherein said bushing ~~having~~ has a body section with a first diameter and a collar section at its first end with a second diameter larger than the first diameter, and said the nut is positioned adjacent to the said collar section.

11. (Canceled) ~~A steering mechanism as in claim 1, wherein the nut is a lock nut.~~

12. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, wherein the ~~bushing has an~~ said cylindrical inner wall of said bushing being surrounded by said non-concentric cylindrical ,~~an~~ outer wall, and a radius extending from the axis of said cylindrical inner wall, the radial distance between said inner wall and said outer wall defining the bushing wall thickness, and said the bushing wall thickness varying along the bushing radius over the circumferences of said bushing walls.

13. (Currently amended) A steering mechanism as in claim 1, further including a first bearing assembly rotatably coupling the said pinion shaft section and the to said bushing and a second bearing assembly rotatably coupling said nose section of said pinion to said bushing, wherein said first bearing assembly is located adjacent to said bushing first end, and said second bearing assembly located adjacent to said bushing second end.

14. (Canceled) ~~A steering mechanism as in claim 13, further including a second bearing assembly rotatably coupling the pinion and the bushing, the first bearing assembly located adjacent to the bushing first end, the second bearing assembly located adjacent to the bushing second end.~~

15. (New) An adjustable steering mechanism for an automotive vehicle comprising:

a pinion having a shaft section and a gear section;

a rack having a gear section coupled with said gear section of said pinion;

a housing containing an inner cylindrical wall enclosing portions of said pinion and said rack;

a bushing having an outer cylindrical wall concentrically and rotatably received within said inner cylindrical wall of said housing;

said bushing having an inner cylindrical wall with a defined opening for supporting said pinion along the cylindrical axis of said internal opening;

said inner cylindrical wall being eccentric with respect to said outer cylindrical wall and providing varying thicknesses between said eccentric walls as measured radially around their circumferences,

said bushing being rotatable within said housing, to alter the radial position of said pinion with respect to the cylindrical axis of said inner cylindrical wall of said housing, and to adjust the degree of coupling of said pinion gear teeth with respect to the rack gear teeth;

said defined opening being located at a first end of said bushing for receiving and retaining said shaft section of said pinion for rotation therein; and

a locking device engaged with said bushing and said housing at said first end of said bushing to allow for the loosening of said bushing in said housing and rotational adjustment of said bushing with respect to the housing, and for the tightening of said bushing in said housing and the prevention of rotational movement of said bushing with respect to the housing.